REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action but remain of the position that patentable subject matter is present. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the Declaration of Mr. Schmaucks and the following remarks.

In the response dated January 13, 2004, Applicants had stated that the present invention is patentable over the teachings of Sack and Lundgard. Applicants had supported this statement by explaining, among other things, the synergistic results obtained by the claimed combination of talc and microsilica. The Examiner, however, had stated at paragraph 2 on page 6 of the outstanding Office Action that the synergistic effect of the invention would not be expected to exist beyond the 2:1 weight ratio of the Application. Applicants have enclosed a Declaration of Mr. Schmaucks in order to demonstrate that the synergistic effects of the invention exist beyond the 2:1 weight ratio.

Mr. Schmaucks has prepared various talc/microsilica blends to demonstrate both the high stiffness and high impact that the present invention provides to plastics. Specifically, Mr. Schmaucks prepared and tested 13 different talc/microsilica blends in polypropylene. The results of these tests are illustrated in Figure A of the Declaration. Figure A of the Declaration also contains the test data of Example 1 and Figures 1 and 2 of the Application using talc alone and microsilica alone.

Upon performing some basic calculations, it can be seen that the synergistic results of the invention do exist beyond the 2:1 weight ratio of talc/microsilica. For example, one would expect a 2:1 blend of talc/microsilica to receive 66% of the tensile modulus value and 66% of the impact strength value from talc, and 33% of the tensile modulus value and 33% of the impact strength value from microsilica. In fact, the results achieved by the present invention surpass the expected values over a wide range of talc/microsilica blends as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1,

TALC/MICROSILICA RATIO	LOAD	TENSILE MODULUS EXPECTED/ACHIEVED	IMPACT STRENGTH EXPECTED/ACHIEVED
2:1 (66%:33%)	10	1662/1700	46.3/48.3
3:1 (75%:25%)	10	1698/1720	45.9/46.9
6:1 (85.71%:14.29%)	10	1741/1790	45.3/43.7

Table 1 illustrates the synergistic results of the invention over a number of talc/microsilica blends. It can be seen from Table 1 that the achieved values for a number of talc/microsilica blends surpasses the expected values for tensile modulus and impact strength.

Applicants do note that the synergistic results are not always simultaneously present for both tensile modulus and impact strength for each and every specific talc/microsilica blend. Nevertheless, Applicants submit that the data presented by Mr. Schmaucks adequately demonstrates the synergistic results of the present invention over a broad range of talc/microsilica blends.

In view of the foregoing and the enclosed, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any extensions of time or fees be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit Account # 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,

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Encl: Executed Declaration of Mr. Gerd Schmaucks, signed on February 6, 2004 with 1 page of Table
Return receipt post-card